

The opening of the new Cal/EPA building in Sacramento renews and reaffirms the State of California's commitment to the environment, a commitment almost as old as the state itself.

One of the first environmental challenges the newly formed state government faced in the mid 1800s was debris from hydraulic mining following the gold rush. Water quality concerns, dangers of flooding, impact on agriculture and hazards to navigation were issues every bit as real to nineteenth century Californians as they are at the start of the twenty-first century.

From these beginnings, state government's environmental efforts have expanded over the last century-and-a-half, as Californians have demanded increased protection of our state's resources, natural beauty, and quality of life. Californians have led the nation in recognizing that a healthy economy and a healthy environment must go hand-in-hand.

California has always been a national pioneer in establishing the environmental programs now housed in the boards and departments of Cal/EPA, acting over time to reduce individual environmental risks posed by air and water pollution, solid and hazardous waste management and pesticide application.

As the California Environmental Protection Agency opens its new headquarters building, it celebrates its tenth anniversary. By the standards of other agencies in Sacramento, it is young. However, as the chapters in this book make clear, the components of Cal/EPA have a distinguished and pioneering history. The Department of Pesticide Regulation, for instance, recently celebrated its hundredth anniversary. Cal/EPA's other boards, departments and offices have all pioneered protec-

tion of citizens, often breaking ground with nationwide firsts.

The new Cal/EPA building is important in a variety of ways:

- The revitalization of the state's capital city.
- A ground breaking city/state partnership, with the state leasing a city-owned and privately managed building.
- A thoroughly sustainable and energy-efficient workplace that can serve as both a demonstration project and laboratory to make workplaces even better in the future.
- The first common home for the state's EPA and its six constituent parts. For the first time, specialists in air, water and land protection are housed together and can consult and collaborate informally and continuously as cross-discipline environmental protection becomes more important to all of us.

What we know today, including the questions that we know must still be answered, is vastly greater than what we knew only a decade ago. Our knowledge base provides ever-increasing evidence of the sensitivity of the environment and human health to chemical impacts.

We also have enough experience to know that economic prosperity and environmental protection are not only consistent with but dependent upon each other.

This book tells Cal/EPA's story up to today and gives us a look at what will come next.



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